United Nations A/59/207

General Assembly

Distr.: General
4 August 2004

Original: English

Fifty-ninth session
Item 91 of the provisional agenda*
Eradication of poverty and other development issues

Communication for development programmes in the United Nations system

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General hereby transmits the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization submitted in accordance with General Assembly resolution 50/130.

* A/59/150.

04-45005 (E) 270804

Report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 50/130, including the recommendations of the eighth Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development

Summary

The present report is prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and is being submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session pursuant to its resolution 50/130 of 20 December 1995.

The text presents the inter-agency collaborative mechanisms for effective and integrated follow-up. Eight United Nations agencies, funds and programmes contributed to the review of the existing coordination arrangements.

The recommendations of the eight United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and, in particular, those reached at the eighth Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development (Managua, 26-28 November 2001) are: (a) creation of an international consortium on HIV/AIDS communication strategies; (b) collection and sharing of tools from key agencies/implementers to identify and improve access to proven tools and reduce duplication; (c) improvement of training for journalists by reinforcing learning institutions; and (d) encouragement of the production and dissemination of local media contents while keeping a calculated balance between local, national and international contributions.

To make the free flow of information more than a catchy phrase involves movement and networking among many partners. It also requires intersectoral and interdisciplinary cooperation. The social applications of new technologies, such as the Internet, can be realized only through this kind of collaboration, as exemplified by the shared projects of the United Nations agencies.

Contents

		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Eighth Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development (Managua, 26-28 November 2001)	1–6	4
II.	Declaration of the eighth Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development	7–11	5
III.	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	12–37	6
IV.	United Nations Children's Fund	38–54	10
V.	United Nations Population Fund	55–62	13
VI.	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	63–70	14
VII.	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	71–79	15
VIII.	United Nations Development Programme	80–84	17
IX.	United Nations Environment Programme	85–107	18
X.	Conclusions and recommendations	108	22

I. Eighth Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development (Managua, 26-28 November 2001)

1. Communication for development lies at the heart of the challenge to involve people in the process of their own development. When successful, communication for development is a powerful tool in such areas as health, agriculture and population. It has contributed to poverty reduction and social progress in many countries and, in admittedly fewer countries, has led to a fall in HIV transmission rates.

2. The Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development was conceived as an informal international forum for donors and those working in the field of communications to harmonize approaches, provide news on progress and share good practices. Participants included representatives of United Nations agencies, bilateral agencies, such as the United States Agency for International Development, universities and non-governmental organizations. Round tables in this series meet every two years, under the aegis of a United Nations agency that is chosen by rotation.

3. The seventh Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development, convened in 1998 in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil, and coordinated by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), concluded that greater priority needed to be given to evaluating communication programmes and that more resources should be dedicated to developing capacities for catalysing changes in behaviour change.

4. These topics, with specific reference to HIV/AIDS, became the subject of the eighth Inter-Agency Round Table, organized by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in collaboration with the Panos Institute, the Rockefeller Foundation and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The questions examined at this Round Table concerned the role communicators would have to play in the future, whether current strategies, experience and knowledge were appropriate to slow the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and under which conditions they needed to be expanded.

5. Seventy participants were invited to Managua, representing a wide range of organizations and bodies within the United Nations system, bilateral and other donors, non-governmental organizations and communication specialists. UNFPA was entrusted with providing leadership in this timely initiative, which coincided with the renewed emphasis of the United Nations on inter-agency collaboration. The meeting opened with an overview of the role of communication for development in general and communication in HIV/AIDS programming in particular. Practice, evaluation and challenges were then examined from the perspective of three specific theories — behaviour change communication, communication for social change and advocacy communication.

6. The overall message of the meeting was to stress the need to pause and take stock of the current situation and incorporate lessons learned, before deciding how best to turn today's policy and donor climates to benefit those most affected by underdevelopment. At the end of the discussions, the key points were synthesized in the declaration, excerpts of which follow in section II below.

II. Declaration of the eighth Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development

7. The eighth Inter-Agency Round Table focused on the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the communication challenges it presents. The discussions examined the role of communication, its successes and failures and attempts to deal with the pandemic.

8. The Round Table asserted that:

(a) Communication for development is a powerful process that has shown success in agriculture, population, health, education and many other fields and has contributed substantially to social and economic progress and poverty reduction;

(b) Communication for development is an essential process within human development and must be integrated in economic, political and social change. This process is more than information dissemination. It is a multi-strategy approach that involves and gives voice to all levels of society.

9. On HIV/AIDS communication, the Round Table made the following observations:

(a) HIV/AIDS communicators have been successful in broadening awareness, increasing knowledge of how HIV/AIDS is contracted, placing the epidemic in the context of human rights, increasing knowledge and demand for effective services and mobilizing political support for national health plans;

(b) Local, national and international communities, however, have struggled to make an impact on overall HIV/AIDS rates. Despite increased attention and concern, the pandemic continues to spread;

(c) Recognizing this scenario, the Round Table believes that:

(i) The HIV/AIDS pandemic presents unique and unresolved challenges for communication for development. In the continuing absence of a cure and a vaccine for HIV/AIDS, the capacity of people to communicate with each other is a critical part of containing the epidemic;

(ii) Despite the success noted above, existing HIV/AIDS communication strategies have proved inadequate in containing and mitigating the effects of the epidemic;

(iii) Progress in slowing the epidemic will require a multisectoral response and use of communication strategies to tackle the behaviours related to the spread of the epidemic and to address its causes (inequality, prejudice, poverty, social and political exclusion and discrimination, particularly against women).

10. The Round Table called for:

(a) The international communication response to be rooted in, and subject to, local ownership and agendas;

(b) A redirection of increased resources towards more effective communication programmes based on the principles outlined above;

(c) Programmes to be accountable to those they are designed to benefit;

(d) Increased investments in capacity-building, training and research at the country level in communication for development strategies, evaluation and appropriate indicators; and

(e) A coordinated and concerted multisectoral international and in-country communication response among all partners, involving governments, NGOs, religious leaders, donors, the private sector and particularly those living with HIV/AIDS.

11. **In terms of immediate action, the Round Table recommended the following:**

(a) The formation of an international coalition on HIV/AIDS communication strategies and tools. The work of the coalition will feed into the planning for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria;

(b) The collection and sharing of tools from key agencies and implementers to identify and improve access to proven tools and reduce duplication;

(c) The inclusion by UNESCO of the declaration in its biennial report on communication for development to be submitted to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

III. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

12. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization has been concerned with communication since its inception in 1946. The main orientations of its communication for development policy have, in recent years, been in line with the main policy-development endeavours of other leading United Nations agencies dedicated to human development.

13. In September 2003, UNESCO organized in New Delhi a meeting of international experts to reassess communication for development programmes and to launch new initiatives in this field.

14. The main conclusion was that communication remains essential for development and that radio is an important tool for democracy, as it is still the most widespread medium in rural areas. In addition, the need to improve the training of journalists by reinforcing learning institutions was noted. It was also recommended that UNESCO, together with other United Nations partners, encourage the production and dissemination of local media contents while keeping a calculated balance between local, national and international contributions.

Recent policy changes

15. The action by UNESCO is in line with the objectives set out in the ministerial declaration on the theme "Development and international cooperation in the twenty-first century: the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy", adopted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (July 2000), and those set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (September 2000).

16. The first phase of the World Summit on the Information Society was organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in cooperation with other United Nations agencies, in December 2003.

17. UNESCO, with its constitutional mandate to promote the free exchange of ideas and knowledge, played a key role in the Summit, encouraging the broadest possible participation by decision makers, professional communities, representatives of civil society, bilateral and multilateral partners and the private sector in debates on the conditions for the development of an information society for all.

18. UNESCO continues to stress the vital role of the media in producing, gathering and disseminating quality content within the information society. Individual communication has its limits. Communication to the general public and providing a public sphere through the media will continue to be essential for, inter alia, selecting and interpreting information and placing it in its proper context, and serving as a platform for the exchange of information and ideas upon which people can act and/or interact.

19. The Summit also provided an occasion for the launch of a special initiative to scale up community multimedia centres in Mali, Mozambique and Senegal. The centres combine community radio and telecentres to have an impact on development through capacity-building and equitable access to data, best practices and knowledge in the information society.

20. In order to counter warmongering propaganda and incitement to hatred in triggering and aggravating conflict, UNESCO continues, as it has done in South-East Europe and elsewhere, to support local media whose impartiality is internationally acknowledged, that provide non-partisan information and that defend the values of peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding.

21. An international seminar on assistance to media in tension areas and violent conflicts was organized by UNESCO and the Swedish agency SIDA, in close cooperation. Participants recommended that the objective of assistance during conflicts or in post-conflict societies is to strengthen local media initiatives in all phases of conflict management.

New Partnership for Africa's Development

22. UNESCO has, since its creation, been an active partner of the communication development aspirations and endeavours of Africa. UNESCO considers professional training in communication to be a priority, including the provision of equipment for communication practitioners who have the knowledge and skills required to use communication instruments in support of national social, economic, political and cultural development in Africa.

23. The shared commitment of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is to eradicate poverty and to place African countries on a path of sustainable growth and development. UNESCO supports the training of African journalists, recognizing their pivotal role in the democratization processes in Africa. Working hand in hand with relevant national authorities, efforts will be undertaken to ensure that laws limiting journalists' freedom of expression are reviewed.

International Programme for the Development of Communication

24. To enhance its communication for development activities, UNESCO gives high priority to strengthening communication capacities in developing countries, in particular through its International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), funds-in-trust projects and inter-agency cooperation.

25. In the context of its ongoing reform process, launched within the framework of UNESCO comprehensive reforms, a number of important aspects of the programme have been improved. The IPDC Intergovernmental Council decided, at its twenty-second session, to further concentrate IPDC on a limited number of well-defined, innovative and catalytic projects and to give the highest priority to national, regional and interregional projects in the following areas: promotion of freedom of expression and media pluralism; development of community media; human resource development; and promotion of international partnership.

Programme for creative content

26. Promoting the expression of pluralism and cultural diversity in the media and world information networks is considered by UNESCO to be a vital strategic objective . A recent initiative launched in the area of local content production, a key aspect of development communication, is the new international programme for creative content, aimed at stimulating creativity and innovation in local content production for television, radio and new media in developing countries.

Community media, community multimedia centres

27. Information and communication technologies (ICT) constitute a specific strategic objective in the UNESCO medium-term strategy for 2002-2007. The UNESCO programme for community multimedia centres, which combine traditional community broadcasting with telecentre facilities, continues to grow. The centres have been, or are now being, established in about 20 countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and South-East Europe. They address the digital divide in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, seeking to ensure that information, communication and knowledge become the basic tools of the poor in improving their own lives through an approach that is cost-effective, country-differentiated and empowerment-oriented.

Public service broadcasting

28. UNESCO continued to support the development of public service broadcasting by promoting editorially independent national public broadcasting services, especially in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and to strengthen the educational and cultural mission of public service broadcasting as a gateway to the knowledge society. UNESCO has been committed to supporting and promoting public broadcasting as well as preservation of its contents, which serve the interests of people as citizens rather than as consumers, by reaching all populations and specific groups and thereby contributing to social inclusion and strengthening civil society.

Training of professionals

29. UNESCO places a strong emphasis on varied professional networks, organized both at the regional level and by media sector. It is through such networks that it vocalizes its concerns and identifies human resources for project development; it is also from such networks that its ideas are drawn in the first place.

30. UNESCO participated in a large number of seminars and workshops in close cooperation with other United Nations agencies, offering its communication expertise for preventive health information in Africa and Asia.

Youth, education and information

31. UNESCO is actively assisting young people in producing information themselves by facilitating the creation of youth information and communication networks, by supporting youth training in ICT and by providing appropriate technologies to youth organizations. An important project for UNESCO is INFOYOUTH, a worldwide information network of government authorities, relevant agencies and youth organizations on youth-related issues. The research and content production aspect in this field is developed through the elaboration of specific tools and guidelines and the publication of books and CD-ROMs on the status of youth in the world.

32. UNESCO has started a research programme on media literacy aimed at promoting critical approaches of young people towards the media. In March 2003 the Thessaloniki workshop elaborated a common Mediterranean curriculum on media education training for teachers and a regional strategy for its integration in teaching programmes. It was crucial to strengthen cooperation with media research institutions and national regulatory authorities and educational institutions, through research and policy development aimed at modernizing secondary school programmes in the region.

Communication research

33. Research has always played an important role in UNESCO communication work. UNESCO is also interested in researching communication as a social process. With a policy of continued development and the goal of being increasingly participative, UNESCO is inviting researchers and practitioners, journalists, civil servants and teachers to contribute actively to UNESCO orientations and programmes, in particular through regional and decentralized approaches. In November 2001, this was articulated during an expert meeting convened at Leicester University.

34. The most recent research and leading experiences are contained in a successful multi-author publication on community media, *Challenges to Development* (Paris, March 2002). The broad areas of UNESCO support for research activities in communication and information include:

(a) Strengthening freedom of the press and independent and pluralistic media structures;

(b) Promoting media literacy in formal education programmes;

(c) Community Multimedia Centres, multi-purpose telecentres and social participation;

(d) Social and cultural impact of ICT;

(e) Cultural and linguistic diversity in cyberspace, ICT and distance education.

Initiative BABEL

35. The objectives of this initiative are to promote the use of multilingualism on the Internet with a view to making its contents and services accessible and more equitable for its users worldwide. The project, based on the application of information and communication technologies, is aimed at supporting linguistic and cultural diversity, preventing language segregation and protecting languages in danger of disappearance.

Gender policies

36. UNESCO has continued to study the marginalization of women in the national media and its impact on their access to development communication activities. It can be argued that the inability of women to have equal access to the communication media also denies them the opportunity to have access to development communication activities.

37. A practical handbook on women in the digital age seeks to introduce key themes for women in the digital age through examples of how women are using the Internet. UNESCO consequently launched, jointly with the Pan-African News Agency, its bulletin entitled "Women of Africa" for dissemination throughout the continent. One of the major aims of the bulletin is to improve the professional standards of women journalists with the aim of increasing their participation in the national media.

IV. United Nations Children's Fund

38. The organizational transition of UNICEF to a programming cooperation approach based explicitly on the human rights of children and women and the medium-term strategic plan (2002-2005) has important implications for communication programming. In particular, two areas need to be underlined: a stronger focus on the participatory dimension of communication — meaning a wider, more conscious, more systematic focus on the active involvement of all stakeholders at all stages of communication programming, from assessment to analysis to planning and implementation; and an effort to focus on reaching the most vulnerable children, women and communities. UNICEF recognizes that behaviour development and social change communication is one of the most important programmatic components in the achievement of outcomes for children, as the attainment of these outcomes relies strongly on changes in the attitudes and behaviour of individuals, families, communities, civil society and decision makers, through increased participation and empowerment.

39. Participatory research and other forms of consultation with the involvement of communities are increasingly utilized as the basis for the development of strategic and evidence-based communication interventions. At the headquarters level, the new programming guidance currently being developed includes training modules on strategic communication planning and community participation. In addition, several

studies that have been completed, on mainstreaming community participation, participatory communication and reaching the unreached and most disadvantaged groups, form the state of the art in participatory communication. The experiences documented and widely shared provide substantive lessons that can be adapted to different situations.

40. Through participatory communication, UNICEF is putting communities at the centre of their own development and building community capacity through innovative approaches, such as appreciative inquiry, which emphasize dialogue as central to development.

41. A major communication initiative that is based on the principle "What every adolescent has a right to know" has a clearly defined adolescent-participation component at all stages, as well as an adolescent-capacity-building component. The initiative places the key information-gathering efforts in the hands of young people, with assistance from UNICEF and other experts.

Special session on children and follow-up

42. A model of participation involving children and adults was achieved at the children's forum, held from 5 to 7 May 2002, and at the special session of the General Assembly on children, held from 8 to 10 May 2002 in New York. The special session and the related events brought together world leaders, national delegations, community representatives and hundreds of children. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, young people addressed the General Assembly on behalf of children, presenting bold ideas and creative solutions to the development issues that affect them directly.

43. Channels set up expressly for the special session, or created in response to it, continue to encourage youth participation in communication for progress. UNICEF country offices were deeply involved in advancing public awareness and involvement through the "Say yes for children" campaign, which has secured the commitment of nearly 95 million people to create a world fit for children.

44. Communication for development is also a means of advocating children's rights, influencing legislation and public opinion and mobilizing resources for children. The Director of Communication of UNICEF currently chairs the United Nations Millennium Development Goals communication working group, which coordinates communication work among United Nations organizations and agencies on the Millennium Development Goals. UNICEF has also contributed resources and ideas to the United Nations/British Broadcasting Corporation/Department for International Development partnership to promote the Millennium Development Goals.

Strengthening communication work in the field

45. Communication includes a number of different functions that can be grouped into two main categories: programme communication and media/external relations communication. While the primary focus of programme communication is on the achievement of specific country programme objectives, external communication is a corporate function that must respond to country, regional and global communication needs.

46. Recognition of the different functions of programme communication officers and media/external relations communication officers has recently resulted in the development of new generic job descriptions. The new descriptions, finalized and released in 2000, cover the entire range of the programme communication and communication posts in UNICEF field offices, from regional advisers to country office assistants.

47. As a result of this clarification, UNICEF field offices have attracted staff with the right mix of competencies to undertake the tasks required in participatory communication, community empowerment, strategic communication planning, implementation and re-evaluation.

Training and capacity-building

48. A training package on communication for behaviour change and development, developed in 1998 and tested in several countries, has been finalized. One key strength of the training process is that it allows participants to learn the basic principles and processes of strategic communication for development planning, while planning the communication component of a specific programme or project or country programme.

49. To further support capacity-building in regions and countries, UNICEF is undertaking a communication capacity assessment, starting with five of the seven regions that UNICEF operates. The result will be a database of communication experts that the countries and regions can draw upon. The assessment will also identify institutions that can be strengthened to facilitate training and/or offer communication support to programmes.

50. UNICEF has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Center for Communication Programs at Johns Hopkins University. The purpose of the memorandum is to further strengthen local and regional capacities and enhance the quality of communication planning, implementation and evaluation.

51. The current strategic priorities of UNICEF — HIV/AIDS, child protection, integrated early childhood development, immunization "plus" and girls' education — are at the centre of all communication for development. Audio-visual campaigns for girls' education and fighting HIV/AIDS have been launched globally, while comparable materials for the remaining concerns are planned for the future.

Trends

52. First, communication is increasingly seen as a necessary and integral component of country-level programming, rather than an ad hoc intervention. Second, while in the past the focus of country-level communication interventions was on advocacy and social mobilization strategic components, in recent years there has been increased understanding of the fact that programme communication — the communication strategy specifically aimed at reaching families, communities and individuals to facilitate informed behavioural change — is a necessary strategic component and needs to be utilized in synergy with the other two, if sustained societal change is to be achieved. Increased attention is also being paid to the systematic use of research data within the planning of strategic communication interventions.

53. Social mobilization continues to be extensively utilized at the country level to mobilize civil society organizations in support of development goals and to create an enabling environment for change. Non-governmental organizations, religious organizations and the private sector have been increasingly mobilized for a variety of programmes, from working with religious leaders in the Sudan to national immunization days in all polio-endemic countries. Other civil society organizations, such as universities and medical associations, are increasingly involved in partnering with UNICEF on a variety of development goals.

Challenges

54. Challenges remain in reaching the unreached and emergency situations, which are two areas that deserve increased attention in terms of communication programming. The use of strategic communication planning for polio eradication in emergency contexts has allowed countries to adapt existing methodologies, creating a richness of experience that needs to be recorded and shared, and whose lessons need to be integrated within existing communication guidance.

V. United Nations Population Fund

55. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development mandates the following priorities in UNFPA advocacy communication: (a) to build consensus around the Programme of Action principles and goals; (b) to promote reproductive health and rights; (c) to increase focus on young people and displaced persons; (d) to integrate population issues in development; (e) to advocate for gender equity, women's empowerment and partnership with men; and (f) to mobilize resources for reproductive health and population issues.

56. In support of population and development, reproductive health, reproductive rights and gender equity, the UNFPA communication approach is to ensure complementarities between advocacy and other communication strategies critical to the Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals. These include behaviour change communication, education and social/community mobilization, operating at three levels: global or interregional, regional, and country programmes.

57. UNFPA is one of the sponsors of UNAIDS and focuses its HIV/AIDS work on prevention issues. Owing to the unique challenges that HIV/AIDS presents for population and development communicators, UNFPA organized, in 2001, the eighth Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development, in collaboration with the Panos Institute, the Rockefeller Foundation and UNESCO.

58. Another major focus of the communication work of UNFPA is the promotion of gender equity and women's empowerment. The efforts to build national capacity in promoting gender awareness and fostering gender equality emphasize the essential role of advocacy, information, knowledge and awareness in improved policy dialogue and attitudinal and behavioural changes.

59. One of the priorities of UNFPA is to improve the reproductive health of adolescents and young people. Recognizing that many attitudes, behavioural lifestyles and gender perspectives are formed during the early adolescent years,

communication strategies are geared towards creating an enabling environment to support adolescent health and development.

60. New information and communication technologies offer additional opportunities to involve communities and get their voices heard in population and development issues. In that regard, telephone helplines are increasingly utilized within UNFPA country programmes for an assortment of age groups. Hotlines are part of multimedia campaigns or are used in tandem with reproductive-health service delivery. Similarly, UNFPA supports the development of compelling and culturally appropriate communications on the International Conference on Population and Development through partnerships among local FM radio networks and community-based organizations dealing with health, education, youth and women.

61. At the global level, advocacy continues to ensure that the international community and international media are aware of the importance of the Conference goals in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Another major aim of global advocacy is to help mobilize resources for population and reproductive health programmes.

62. The new development frameworks also provide an important locus for Conference advocacy, and UNFPA has used opportunities to integrate population, reproductive health and gender issues into national and sectoral policies and plans. UNFPA advocacy efforts help ensure that population and reproductive health concerns are fully reflected in international and national development frameworks, including national reports on the Millennium Development Goals, national poverty reduction policies and plans, sectoral development plans, common country assessments and United Nations development assistance frameworks, and consolidated appeals for countries in conflict and emergency and post-conflict situations.

VI. Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

63. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) recognizes the importance of communications programming to promote a social and political environment more conducive to HIV/AIDS prevention, care and impact reduction. The UNAIDS communication programme follows two tracks. The first track supports the mission of UNAIDS as the leading advocate for action against HIV/AIDS. The second track supports the implementation of behaviour change communication activities as part of the comprehensive interventions and services aimed at HIV/AIDS prevention.

64. The special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS, held in July 2001, adopted a Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, which noted the role of communication in HIV/AIDS prevention and care. UNAIDS recognizes that without a strong communication component, the goals set out in the Declaration of Commitment cannot be effectively met.

65. The special session was successfully positioned as a turning point in the world's response to the global epidemic. Instrumental in this success was the extensive worldwide media coverage the session received, which, according to the United Nations Secretariat, achieved an unprecedented level for a United Nations

event. The communications strategy for the special session broke new ground in coordinating efforts across the United Nations system and utilizing the strengths of all partners. The strategy also evolved to support the Secretary-General's call to action and his initiative for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

66. UNAIDS has also publicized the critical dimensions of the epidemic to a wide range of audiences through both mass media and traditional means of communication. It produces a range of resource and policy material that inform decision-making at the policy level. The report on the global HIV/AIDS epidemic, 2002, annual epidemiological updates and several other flagship publications form the bedrock of UNAIDS communication efforts to highlight the spread of the epidemic.

67. The UNAIDS web site has emerged as one of the main sources of information for the media and the public at large. The UNAIDS web site has received over a million hits during key HIV/AIDS events, such as World AIDS Day and international and regional AIDS conferences.

68. UNAIDS also provides support to behaviour change programmes at the global and national levels. Its current efforts in this are guided by the goals set in the Declaration of Commitment, which calls on all Member States to ensure that by 2005 a wide range of prevention programmes, including information, education and communication programmes, is available in all countries, that these programmes are culturally sensitive and available in local languages and that they reduce risky behaviour, encourage responsible sexual behaviour, reduce harm related to drug use and expand access to male and female condoms, clean injecting equipment, safe blood supplies, treatment of sexually transmitted infections and voluntary counselling and testing.

69. The UNAIDS communication framework for HIV/AIDS has been applied at the country level in developing national communication programming strategies. UNAIDS is providing technical support to United Nations theme groups and national AIDS programmes around the world.

70. UNAIDS has also co-hosted, with UNFPA and WHO, an international consultation on social marketing and communication, which brought together communication and social marketing experts to discuss strategies to bridge the condom gap internationally. The inter-agency task teams set up by UNAIDS on young people and mother-to-child transmission are also developing communication and advocacy strategies.

VII. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

71. In its support of the implementation of resolution 51/172 and the recommendations of the 2002 Inter-Agency Round Table on Communication for Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Communication for Development Group, located in the Extension, Education and Communication Service, has focused its attention on the following priority areas:

(a) Identification and appraisal of communication needs in support of agricultural and rural development;

(b) Application of appropriate communication policies, strategies, approaches, media and messages;

(c) Development and implementation of communication training activities to build national capacity;

(d) Effective use of communication methodologies and technologies with rural people.

72. For years, FAO has been promoting and advocating the role of communication in sustainable development. More recently, the organization has given special attention to the emergence of newer communication approaches, media and tools. The FAO Communication for Development Group carries out both normative and field activities, ranging from formulation of methodologies, policies and strategies to project design, implementation and evaluation. Emphasis is placed on giving technical advice to Governments on communication as part of development policy and on the establishment of national communication systems that can support development initiatives. Training in communication skills and methodologies is equally important in order to identify successful and cost-effective communication approaches for specific audiences and messages.

Capacity-building in communication for development

73. A critical factor in meeting the challenge of ensuring food security in developing countries is human resource development through knowledge-building and information-sharing. FAO has provided training to rural radio broadcasters in Mali, Burkina Faso and other francophone African countries to prepare programmes that reflect the information needs of rural audiences.

74. FAO has experience and expertise to support capacity-building interventions that include:

(a) Training rural radio broadcasters. FAO is collaborating with the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, which has a global network, to train broadcasters on reporting techniques for agricultural and food security issues;

(b) Support in the design and implementation of national communication policies in various African countries (e.g., Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau). FAO has worked with national policy makers from over 20 African countries to help develop national communication policies and action plans.

Rural radio

75. Significant emphasis continues to be placed on the use of rural radio, which is one of the most widespread communication tools in developing countries. In this context, FAO hosted two important events, which brought together radio professionals from the North and South to share ideas and experiences on knowledge and information dissemination for promoting rural and agricultural development: an international workshop on farm radio broadcasting, on the theme "Information and communication technologies servicing rural radio: new contents, new partnerships", and a workshop on rural radio and food security.

Information and communication technologies

76. Studies were conducted by FAO to identify innovative communication strategies, including the assessment of the role of new ICT in rural development. The potential role of the new ICT for improving agricultural productivity and food security was piloted and successfully implemented in a number of applications, such as the Virtual Extension and Research Communication Network (VERCON), and the Farmer Information Network.

77. VERCON aims at improving linkages between and within agricultural research and extension institutions by allowing them to develop, share, store and retrieve information. A VERCON project was implemented by the Egyptian Government with support from the FAO technical cooperation programme. As a result, plans are now under way for replicating the initiative to cover all the governorates in the country. VERCON proposals are currently being developed also for Bhutan, Uganda and India.

78. The Farmer Information Network application is a network of rural people using communication tools and processes to facilitate the generating, gathering and exchange of knowledge and information among themselves and with the intermediary organizations that work with them. FAO is helping to close the digital divide in rural areas by connecting community radio stations to the Internet and is training broadcasters to collect and adapt information for improved agriculture and food security. In addition, FAO is working with member countries and other United Nations agencies to formulate national communication policies that integrate Internet information technologies and conventional media, such as rural radio. Common approaches on the integrated use of media and ICT have been developed with partner organizations such as UNESCO for applications that address the digital divide in some of the poorest communities of the developing world. The Radio Kothmale model of UNESCO and the FAO proposal on the theme "Relier la radio rurale à l'Internet", while having different objectives, adopt the same type of principle and can provide potential areas of collaboration between the two agencies.

Field support for the fight against HIV/AIDS

79. HIV/AIDS has a substantial economic and social impact on rural families and households. The disease is killing people in their most productive years, decimating the workforce and impoverishing households. FAO now regards the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a legitimate agricultural and food security topic and, therefore, an integral part of its activities. FAO and UNFPA have ongoing projects in Cameroon and Mali related to the promotion of reproductive health and gender equity. In Cameroon, the project is aimed at reaching women and youth to increase their access to health services. In Mali, the project objective is to change the attitude and behaviour of men vis-à-vis women's rights to reproductive health and socio-economic responsibilities in the society.

VIII. United Nations Development Programme

80. The United Nations Development Programme adopted ICT for development as one of its six main focus areas in 2000, in the belief that by making ICT an integral part of development cooperation and solutions, developing countries and their

partners can work to address the current economic, social and digital divides in more innovative and effective ways.

81. The UNDP approach is inclusive and holistic, with a view to enhancing broad national ownership, effectiveness and sustainability of the strategies and initiatives. UNDP is currently providing programme and policy support in close to 60 countries through its thematic ICT for Development Trust Fund, which has been operational since early 2002. It currently provides support for programmes in 15 of these countries, with support upcoming for another 16, in keeping with its streamlined strategic focus and with a view to encouraging resource mobilization and initiatives that are catalytic in nature. Policy-strategy innovation is evident in countries such as Mozambique where UNDP support in prioritizing, costing and adopting an integrated approach has enhanced quick resource mobilization and implementation potential.

82. Schools, particularly in rural areas, are viewed as community hubs for lifelong e-learning and extension of ICT access and ICT services to communities at large. First in Malaysia, and later in Bolivia, an innovative partnership for "e-learning for life" has been launched with the Coca-Cola Foundation. In late October, in partnership with the Government of China (Ministry of Education) and the Department for International Development, a major initiative committing $9.4 million to support distance education and teacher training was launched in western China. UNDP has also partnered with CISCO Systems to support networking academies in the least developed countries of Africa, Asia and the Arab States. In 2002, ICT United Nations Volunteers were placed in academies in approximately 20 developing countries, mostly least developed countries, under the United Nations Information Technology Service umbrella.

83. In Asia, the UNDP regional ICT programme has launched a major analytical and policy review with the aim of determining good practices and policy lessons that can be drawn from attempts to deploy ICT to address the priorities of the Millennium Development Goals. A similar initiative is under development for a set of countries in Africa. At the country level, development goals and the Millennium Development Goals in relation to which ICT can have more of an impact are being identified as priorities that can be addressed through national e-strategies and programmes.

84. UNDP has also focused on assisting countries in special circumstances and post-conflict situations where ICT is a critical enabler for facilitating reconstruction, aid coordination and development activities in the country and strengthening human capacities in the civil service and for public service delivery. In Afghanistan, UNDP has also begun work in supporting ICT capacity development through establishment of a CISCO Networking Academy Program at Kabul University, the provision of ICT technical workshops and the establishment of ICT training centres at central and provincial levels for training of users.

IX. United Nations Environment Programme

85. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is playing, and will continue to play, an increasingly collaborative role with sister United Nations agencies in the field of communications for development. The UNEP motto is "Environment for development". Maintaining a high profile for environmental

issues among the international community, the private sector and civil society is a UNEP priority. A dynamic communications strategy is vital for achieving this goal.

86. The UNEP communications strategy is guided by its Division of Communications and Public Information. The role of the Division in complementing and adding value to the organization's substantive programme of work encompasses publications, awards and special events, such as World Environment Day, supported by proactive media liaison, using such tools as press releases, video news releases, public service announcements and strategically placed op-ed articles.

Our Planet

87. A UNEP quarterly magazine, *Our Planet*, carries authoritative articles by leading figures. For example, editions in the reporting period have included articles by Børge Brende, Norway's Environment Minister and immediate past Chairman of the Commission on Sustainable Development; Anwarul Chowdhury, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States; Richard G. Lugar, Chairman of the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee; Nelson Mandela; and Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan.

Global Environment Outlook

88. The UNEP flagship publication *Global Environment Outlook* is the most authoritative reference work of the United Nations system on the current state of the global environment and its relationship to sustainable development. It draws extensively on the work of other United Nations bodies, as well as that of collaborating centres, scientists and policy makers around the globe, and thus helps promote the work of the United Nations system on development issues. The *Global Environment Outlook Yearbook 2003* was published in March 2004, and its contents were widely reported in the media, especially with regard to the emerging challenges of nitrogen overload and declining fisheries. UNEP published several other reports during the reporting period, all of which were accompanied by media releases and achieved widespread media coverage.

Raising environmental awareness

89. UNEP continues to set a high standard for media visibility and the environmental issues that drive its programme. UNEP media releases receive widespread worldwide coverage and help generate substantial interest in the mainstream media on environmental issues. UNEP is also a partner in the editorially independent Television Trust for the Environment, whose regular "Earth report" bulletins on environment and development are broadcast on *BBC World* television to millions of people worldwide.

90. The Division of Communications and Public Information continues to forge a growing range of partnerships to promote communication for development through audio-visual media. *Ocean Wonderland*, the world's first IMAX film on the underwater marine environment, grossed $6 million in the first 10 months after being released in February 2003.

91. Another example of the UNEP strategy of seeking innovative corporate partnerships to reach new audiences with essential environment and development

messages is the film *Critical Assignment*, which is an action-based feature film with an environmental message.

Focus on Your World

92. UNEP has a growing library of powerful photographs on the theme of environment and development as a result of its regular "Focus on Your World" photographic competitions, the first of which was launched in 1999. The fourth "Focus on Your World" competition was launched on World Environment Day 2004 (5 June), in Barcelona, Spain, along with simultaneous launches in more than 20 cities worldwide.

Internet

93. Over the past year, UNEP has energetically overhauled its web service, upgrading content and providing a service in French as well as English to enhance communication with Governments, scientists, businesses, youth and children and the general public.

94. The introduction in July 2003 of a mirror site based in Europe increased speed of access by 400 per cent. The site now averages over 6 million hits a month, an increase of approximately 50 per cent over the year. All UNEP divisions and units, increasingly coordinated by the Division of Communications and Public Information, are now exploiting the Internet to communicate environment and development issues to a wider audience.

World Environment Day and other United Nations observances

95. UNEP plays an active lead and/or supportive role in communicating information about United Nations commemorative years and days. The United Nations system flagship environmental event is World Environment Day, celebrated each year on 5 June. Led by UNEP, World Environment Day prompts street rallies, green concerts, essay and poster competitions in schools and clean-up campaigns around the globe.

96. World Environment Day 2004 saw the establishment of a new trend with the launch, in Barcelona and San Francisco, of World Environment Day 2005. San Francisco, the host city, has already embarked on an extensive programme of fund-raising and awareness-raising on the theme "Green cities".

Environmental awards

97. The main annual award of UNEP, the UNEP Sasakawa Environment Prize, continues to generate widespread worldwide attention. The 2003 Prize was presented to joint winners, Xie Zhenhua, Director of China's State Environmental Protection Administration, and Brazilian environmental campaigner Dener Giovanini, in November 2003.

98. The same year also witnessed the unveiling of a new UNEP annual international environment award, "Champions of the earth". The award will be presented to six outstanding environmental achievers and leaders — one from each region of the world — late in 2004.

Support for Africa

99. UNEP has provided substantive and communications support to the environment initiative of NEPAD. The NEPAD environment initiative is a coherent action plan to address the region's environmental challenges within the framework of combating poverty and promoting socio-economic development.

Capacity-building for the media

100. To enhance the quality and quantity of media coverage on environment and development, UNEP conducts capacity-building exercises for journalists from the developing world and countries with economies in transition. In December 2003, in Addis Ababa, a workshop was held simultaneously with the Pan-African Implementation and Partnership Conference on Water for 30 journalists from 19 countries in Africa on environmental reporting. Similar capacity-building workshops for journalists were conducted in other regions.

Engaging civil society

101. Recent years have seen an acceleration of consultations and collaborative thinking on how UNEP can work more closely with civil society to address the environmental and sustainable development challenges of the twenty-first century. The UNEP strategy to enhance civil society engagement in its work is based on three interdependent pillars: information exchange, engagement at the programmatic level and engagement at the policy level.

102. The newly established UNEP Stakeholder and Major Group Branch is broadening the range of actors engaging with UNEP at the policy development level to include all the major groups defined in Agenda 21.

Women and environment

103. UNEP worked in 2003 and 2004 to enhance the involvement of women in sustainable development through a policy handbook and targeted workshops. Empowering women by providing access to, and control of, vital natural resources is a key issue for poverty eradication and sustainable development. Two workshops, held in June and July 2003 in Côte d'Ivoire and Chad, attracted more than 150 participants each to discuss the role of women in managing biodiversity as a means of poverty reduction. May 2004 saw the launch of a new UNEP publication, *Women and the Environment*, at the third session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. The book calls for greater recognition of the role of women in conservation and poverty eradication.

Clean Up the World Campaign

104. The reporting period also saw the strengthening of the UNEP relationship with the Clean Up the World Campaign, one of its most striking civil society success stories. Initiated in 1993 with UNEP seed money and the mission to promote and facilitate positive environmental action on a global scale, the Campaign has grown to become one of the largest community-based environmental projects in the world, inspiring an estimated 40 million participants from more than 100 countries each year to clean up and conserve their local environment.

Children and youth

105. Another major group with which UNEP has a long-standing relationship is children and youth. The new UNEP Tunza children and youth strategy, launched in 2003 and unanimously approved by the UNEP Governing Council, aims to increase UNEP activities to give this major consumer group — whose lifestyle decisions will influence sustainable development for years to come — a voice in policy-making and the tools to help themselves and their communities improve the global environment.

Sport and environment

106. UNEP has been working in the field of sport and environment since 1994, when it signed a cooperative agreement with the International Olympic Committee. In that same year, the Committee made the environment the third pillar of olympism, alongside sport and culture. Ever since, environmental sustainability has been gaining importance as a central part of any country's bid to host Olympic events. UNEP is also working with other United Nations agencies in the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace.

107. One of the major partners of UNEP in promoting environment-friendly sports is the Japan-based Global Sports Alliance, which co-sponsors the Global Forum for Sport and Environment. At the second Global Forum for Sport and Environment, held in Tokyo, in November 2003, more than 200 participants, including athletes, sports federations, sports goods manufacturers and NGOs, addressed environmental sustainability questions.

X. Conclusions and recommendations

108. The conclusions and recommendations are as follows:

(a) **Communication for development is instrumental in the success of any endeavour to achieve human development and, consequently, greater integration in the economic and social planning process is called for;**

(b) **This, in turn, calls for an increased resources redirected towards more effective communication programmes, including increased investment in capacity-building, training and research at the country level;**

(c) **The United Nations system, working through a number of mechanisms, such as communication for development round tables, has achieved a certain degree of cohesion in its approach and action in this field. This success calls for enhanced synergy among all partners, at both the international and country levels, including governments, NGOs, donors, the private sector and community leaders;**

(d) **Information and communication technologies have become an integral part of the development process. Developing countries and their partners should intensify efforts to address the current digital divide in a more innovative and effective way, based on the enhancement of national ownership and the effectiveness and sustainability of the related initiatives and strategies.**